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Letter dated 3 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am communicating with you to convey our grave concern regarding the alarming deterioration of the human rights situation in Turkey and the direct impact of this anomalous situation in the areas of the Republic of Cyprus currently occupied militarily by Turkey. More than a year after the attempted coup in Turkey, the state of emergency is still in force and the measures enacted and enforced through the emergency decrees have often been excessive and disproportionate, with grave and far-reaching negative consequences for Turkish society.

Various international bodies and States have voiced their concerns about the further erosion of the democratic institutions in Turkey, the adoption of authoritarian policies and the continuous violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the silencing of dissident voices and of any form of criticism against the Turkish Government and AKP. Cyprus, however, has additional reasons to be worried about these negative developments in Turkey, as these have a direct impact on the everyday life of a significant number of Cypriot citizens who live under Turkey's full political, military, administrative and economic control in the areas of Cyprus presently occupied by it.

The Turkish Government has been extending to the occupied areas of Cyprus its purges of persons allegedly linked to a "terrorist organization", meaning the Fettulah Gülen movement, by proceeding with arresting people on the basis of a list.

The information about the extension of the purges to the occupied part of Cyprus cannot be disassociated from a wider methodical attempt by the Turkish Government to impose a political, economic and social agenda in the occupied areas along the lines of similar policies in Turkey. In this connection, we have witnessed, lately, an intensification of Turkish attempts to change the demographics of the occupied areas of Cyprus through colonization and a "citizenship" granting process for Turkish citizens. Illegal Turkish settlers, brought to Cyprus from Anatolia, consciously or unconsciously assume the role of a catalyst for the advancement and *implementation of AKP* policies intended to further integrate the Turkish Cypriot

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community into Turkey and to "Turkify" the occupied areas of Cyprus, with far-reaching repercussions in the Government-controlled areas of the Republic.

Since AKP rose to power in Turkey, the Turkish Government has been implementing, in the occupied part of Cyprus, a systematic policy of empowering religiousness in the daily life of the Turkish Cypriots, a practice which obtrudes on their distinct cultural and secular identity. This policy is pursued largely through education. Within a short period of time, various religious educational institutions and religious schools began operating in the occupied part of Cyprus with the economic support of Turkey. In 2009, religion was introduced as a compulsory course in public education, despite reactions from educators. Recently adopted controversial reforms in the Turkish education system are expected to be integrated into the school curricula in the occupied areas. Similarly, the Turkish Cypriot academy for teachers will soon be abolished on the basis of a so-called "protocol" signed between Turkey and the secessionist entity in the occupied areas, thus putting an end to a long tradition in the education of the Turkish Cypriot community. Moreover, the Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports has established in the occupied areas of Cyprus an "Oversea Coordination Office", aiming at enforcing, organizing and managing all sports and youth events and programmes. Notwithstanding the open, and in some cases intense, reaction from organized groups in the Turkish Cypriot community, the aforesaid changes seem to be permanent, while any serious criticism of religion-related policies is liable to be denounced as a lack of faith in, or malevolent opposition to, the Turkish Government.

The full economic dependency of the Turkish Cypriot community on Turkey constitutes yet another significant parameter of Turkey's plan to dominate and fully control every single aspect of life in the occupied areas. The Turkish political institutions operating in the occupied areas, headed by the so-called "Turkish Embassy", in collaboration with business and economic circles close to the Turkish Government, have been pursuing an agenda of fully subordinating to Turkey the economic activities and development of the Turkish Cypriots. The framework of this policy is clearly defined by the so-called "economic protocols" signed between Turkey and the secessionist entity, as well as by a series of other "agreements" dictating Turkey's terms over the Turkish Cypriots. The most indicative example of Turkey's evident imposition of full control over the occupied areas is the illegal water connection of the aforesaid areas, through a subsea water pipeline, with Turkey. Turkey not only holds ownership of the water and of the relevant installations, but also dictates the terms of its management and monopoly in its own interest. According to Turkish officials, a similar "agreement" is on track regarding an electricity connection between Turkey and the occupied areas.

The impact of Turkey's policies in the Turkish Cypriot community is direct, visible and felt by everybody. The most striking example, of immense symbolism, is the enforced application, in the occupied area, of the Turkish time zone, which results in the absurdity of two time zones being operative simultaneously on the same small island. Undeterred by massive protests, Turkey has imposed its policy for two years in a row, thereby consolidating the division of Cyprus also in terms of time regulation.

The future of the Turkish Cypriots, as one of the two Cypriot communities, is inextricably linked to the future of all Cypriots and of the whole of Cyprus. This is why my Government follows closely the alarming developments in the occupied areas and reiterates its expression of grave concern for the predicament afflicting part of the people of Cyprus, the Turkish Cypriot community. Their identity and future seem to be in serious jeopardy as a result of Turkey's assimilation polices,

especially in view of their extremely limited ability, under the present conditions, to react, disagree or criticize.

It is the expectation of the Government of Cyprus that the international community will demonstrate the same concern for the human rights situation and the security of Cypriot citizens in the occupied part of Cyprus as it has for the Turkish citizens in Turkey.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kornelios **Korneliou**